

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks that follow, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Independent claims 1, 21, 23, and 24 have been amended. Claims 1, 6, 7, 11-14 and 21-30 remain pending.


Claims 1, 6, 7, 11-14 and 21-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oh (US Patent 6,913,157) in view of Lynn (US Patent 4,387,822). Independent claims 1, 21, 23, and 24 previously were amended to recite that at least one of the threads extends along its length at a first lead angle and at least one of the threads extends along its length at a second lead angle, where the first and second lead angles are different. Independent claims 1, 21, 23, and 24 now have been amended to recite that when the component members are moved closer together one of the threads of the female screw initially slides against a thread of the male screw having the second lead angle and that when the threads of the two components engage there is elastic deformity. Support for these amendments is set forth at least in paragraphs 0050 and 0053 of the application as filed and at least in Figures 10 and 11 of the drawings.

In the Office Action under reply, the Examiner indicated that the written disclosure of Oh sets forth that thread element 36 may be separated from thread element 24. Even so, in such an altered embodiment (discussed in Oh in Col. 5, lines 20-27), Oh's structure still would not result in the features of the applicant's invention as now particularly recited in each of the independent claims. That is, upon initial contact of the male and female threads in Oh, all of the contacting threads have the same lead angle, and only after some meaningful rotation would some of the threads contact anti-backoff member 36 (having a different

angle). On the other hand, and quite distinctly, the present invention calls for a thread of one component initially contacting (i.e., first contacting) a thread on the other component that has a different lead angle. Clearly, Oh's anti-backoff member 36 is explicitly taught in that patent to be located near the end of rotation between the components and, therefore, whether or not a space exists between anti-backoff member 36 and a closure thread 24 in Oh, this reference (with or without the teachings of Lynn) neither discloses nor suggests various structural and functional features recited in each of the independent claims of the present application. It is noted that some of these arguments were submitted in applicant's prior response, but the Examiner indicated that certain features relied upon were not recited in the claims (See Office Action, page 3, 3rd paragraph). Since suitably distinct features are now explicitly recited in the claims, it is submitted that the claimed invention is patently distinct and unobvious over the prior art. It is therefore requested that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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